

What is claimed is:

1. A method for searching a document database, comprising:  
receiving a search query;  
determining whether a query result corresponding to the search query is stored in a cache;  
when the determining returns a positive result, accessing a reuse count for the search query;  
when predefined conditions are satisfied, including the reuse count being larger than a predetermined threshold count, generating an improved search result in accordance with a first set of predetermined searching criteria; and  
returning at least a subset of the improved search result.
2. A method for searching a document database, comprising:  
receiving a search query;  
determining whether a query result corresponding to the search query is stored in a cache;  
when the determining returns a positive result, accessing a reuse count for the search query, including determining a quality of the cached query result;  
when the reuse count is larger than a predetermined threshold count and the quality indication meets predefined criteria, generating an improved search result in accordance with a first set of predetermined searching criteria; and  
returning at least a subset of the improved search result.
3. The method of claim 2 further comprising:  
updating the cache with the improved search result; and  
updating the reuse count of the search query.
4. The method of claim 3 further comprising:  
if the reuse count is larger than the predetermined threshold count and the quality indication does not meet the predefined criteria, retrieving the improved search result from the cache; and  
returning the improved search result.

5. The method of claim 2, wherein the first set of predetermined search criteria comprises:
  - searching both a standard database and an additional database, wherein the query result stored in the cache is generated using the standard database when the quality indication has the first value.
6. The method of claim 2, wherein the first set of predetermined search criteria comprises:
  - searching a database with a larger search depth than a standard search depth, wherein the query result stored in the cache is generated using the standard search depth when the quality indication has the first value.
7. The method of claim 2, wherein the first set of predetermined search criteria comprises:
  - searching a database using modified search criteria.
8. The method of claim 2, wherein generating an improved search result comprises:
  - submitting the search query to one or more document identification and document servers in accordance with the first set of predetermined search criteria;
  - receiving search results from the one or more document identification and document servers; and
  - creating a search result list from the received search results.
9. The method of claim 2 further comprising:
  - when the cache is determined not to have stored therein query results corresponding to the search query:
    - generating a standard search result in accordance with a second set of predetermined searching criteria;
    - storing the standard search result in the cache;
    - setting the reuse count of the search query to an initial value; and
    - returning the standard search result.
10. The method of claim 9, wherein generating a standard search result comprises:
  - submitting the search query to one or more document identification and document servers in accordance with the second set of predetermined searching criteria;

receiving search results from the one or more document identification and document servers; and

creating a search result list from the received search results.

11. The method of claim 2 further comprising:

if the reuse count is less than or equal to the predetermined threshold count, retrieving a standard search result from the cache; and  
returning the standard search result.

12. A system for searching a document database, comprising:

a cache for storing search results corresponding to previously processed search queries;

a search controller including one or more computer programs containing instructions for:

determining whether a query result corresponding to a specified search query is stored in the cache;

when the determining returns a positive result, accessing a reuse count for the search query;

when predefined conditions are satisfied, including the reuse count being larger than a predetermined threshold count, generating an improved search result in accordance with a first set of predetermined searching criteria; and

returning at least a subset of the improved search result.

13. A system for searching a document database, comprising:

a cache for storing search results corresponding to previously processed search queries;

a search controller including one or more computer programs containing instructions for:

determining whether a query result corresponding to a specified search query is stored in the cache;

when the determining returns a positive result, accessing a reuse count for the search query, including determining a quality of the cached query result;

when the reuse count is larger than a predetermined threshold count and the quality indication meets predefined criteria, generating an improved search result in accordance with a first set of predetermined searching criteria; and

returning at least a subset of the improved search result.

14. The system of claim 13, wherein the search results in the cache comprise:  
identifications of documents;  
contents of portions of documents corresponding to at least a subset of the  
identifications of documents; and  
parameters of documents corresponding to the identifications of documents;
15. The system of claim 13 further comprising instructions for:  
updating the cache with the improved search result; and  
updating the reuse count of the search query.
16. The system of claim 15 further comprising instructions for:  
if the reuse count is larger than the predetermined threshold count and the quality  
indication does not meet the predefined criteria, retrieving the improved search result from  
the cache; and  
returning the improved search result.
17. The system of claim 13, wherein the first set of predetermined search criteria  
comprises:  
searching both a standard database and an additional database, wherein the query  
result stored in the cache is generated using the standard database when the quality indication  
has the first value.
18. The system of claim 13, wherein the first set of predetermined search criteria  
comprises:  
searching a database with a larger search depth than a standard search depth, wherein  
the query result stored in the cache is generated using the standard search depth when the  
quality indication has the first value.
19. The system of claim 13, wherein the first set of predetermined search criteria  
comprises:  
searching a database using modified search criteria.
20. The system of claim 13, wherein generating an improved search result comprises  
instructions for:

submitting the search query to one or more document identification and document servers in accordance with the first set of predetermined search criteria;  
receiving search results from the one or more document identification and document servers; and  
creating a search result list from the received search results.

21. The system of claim 13, the computer programs of the search controller further comprising instructions for:

when the cache is determined not to have stored therein query results corresponding to the search query:

generating a standard search result in accordance with a second set of predetermined searching criteria;

storing the standard search result in the cache;

setting the reuse count of the search query to an initial value; and

returning the standard search result.

22. The system of claim 21, wherein the instructions for generating a standard search result comprise instructions for:

submitting the search query to one or more document identification and document servers in accordance with the second set of predetermined searching criteria;

receiving search results from the one or more document identification and document servers; and

creating a search result list from the received search results.

23. The system of claim 13, the computer programs of the search controller further comprising instructions for:

if the reuse count is less than or equal to the predetermined threshold count, retrieving a standard search result from the cache; and

returning the standard search result.

24. The system of claim 13, including:

one or more interface modules for receiving a search query;

one or more storage modules for storing document identifications and the corresponding documents to be searched;

wherein the search controller is configured to generate the improved search result by searching at least a subset of the stored document identifications.